

B R I E F  
O B S E R V A T I O N S  
U P O N T H E  
V I N D I C A T I O N  
O F T H E  
Trinity and Incarnation,

By the Learned Dr. W. Sherlock.

**T**HE Notes upon the Creed of *Athanasius* have been already printed by themselves, and were received and approved by several Learned Men, both of London and in the Country. Dr. *Sherlock* has thought fit to oppose to them a large Book, in which at *Page 142.* he saith, *My Undertaking is to vindicate the Athanasian Creed, and the Doctrine of a Trinity in Unity.*

Yet in this *Vindication*, he hath given up to his Adversary, all the ancient Defences of this Creed and of the Trinity, on which his Predecessors in this Controversy, were wont to insist; and has advanced in their room, an Hypothesis or Explication, never so much as named or heard of before. He pretends to save by these two words, *Self-consciousness* and *Mutual-consciousness*, all the

Difficulties of this Great Mystery; so sufficiently and evidently, that the Notion of a Trinity in Unity, is now (He saith) as clear and easy, as that of but One God. But this is too much for any Man to take on his bare word, or without carefully examining what He has said.

1. Concerning the Divine Substance, Nature, or Essence: for in this Question these are Equivalent Terms, both with the Vindicator, and with the Author of the Notes.

2. How doth he describe the *Three Persons*; and how is each Person *one with it self*; and how are they *distinct* each from other.

3. How are they *united with one another*; and how do they *all* make one God.

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First:

First; Concerning the Divine Substance, or Essence, or Nature.

In his Discourses concerning the Divine Substance, or Essence; the Vindicator seems sometimes to be a perfect *Whiff*; to deny all Spiritual and Immaterial Substance; or that there is any other Substance but *Matter*, or *Body*.

He saith (for example) at *Pag. 69. We can frame no Idea of Substance, but what we have from Matter. When we conceive of God as a Substance (he saith there) We find it impossible to conceive, how there should be Three Divine Persons, without Three distinct Infinite Substances. — A Person and an Intelligent Substance are Reciprocal Terms; and therefore Three distinct Persons, are Three distinct Numerical Substances; and one Numerical Substance, is but one Numerical Person.* He says, that these are all Carnal Reasonings, which arise from our conceiving of God as a Substance; of which we can have no Idea, but what is *Material*. He concludes in the same place, and often elsewhere, *We must not seek for any other Substance in God, but Infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness.* But as if he had been a little too liberal in that, he says at *P. 72. Wisdom and Truth are the true Nature and Essence (or Substance) of God.* He often exhorts his Reader, particularly at *P. 70. To set aside all these Material Images of Essence and Substance; and to contemplate God as Eternal Truth and Wisdom, and then the Notion of God is very plain and easy.* He adds at *P. 138. That which has confounded this Mystery (of the Trinity) has been the vain Endeavour of reducing it to Terms of Art, such as Nature, Essence, Substance, Subsistence, Person, Hypostasis, and the like.*

He presumes to say at *P. 139. The Fathers nicely distinguished between Hypostasis or Person, and Nature, or Essence, or Substance; saying, that there are Three Persons, and but one Nature or Essence, or Substance.* But then, when Men curiously examined the Signification of these words, they found, that upon some account or other, they were applicable to this Mystery. *For what is*

*the Substance and Nature of God? How can Three distinct Persons have but one Numerical Substance? What is the distinction between Essence and Personality?*

Now I ask, Is this to vindicate the *Athanasian Creed*, as the Doctor undertook to do; or to slight and overthrow it? The chief business of the *Athanasian Creed*, is to distinguish between the *Substance* and *Persons* in God, to show that the Persons are Three, and the Substance but One. The Vindicator could not have more effectually given up the Catholic Doctrine to the Note-maker, than by thus frequently denying, there is any real Divine Substance at all (which is more than his Adversary required, and than he will accept) and by saying, Men have unduly used these Terms by their applying them to God. The pretence of the Brief Notes is no other, but what the Vindicator (we have seen) often grants: that there is no difference between Substance and Person in God; and that therefore Three Divine Persons and One Divine Substance is a senseless Contradiction.

But then 'tis as senseless to deny the Divine Substance, and to reduce the whole Notion of God to *Wisdom and Truth*; for these are Properties that cannot subsist, but in some Substance. Nor do I think, that the Trinitarians will forgo their old Explanations, by *Persons and Substances*; for the Doctor's new *Wind-mills of Self-consciousness and Mutual-consciousness.* They will certainly abide by the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, which suppose a Real Divine Substance, in which do subsist Three Divine Persons. It will be always Heresy with them, to deny *Homo-ousios*, or that Christ is of *Like and Equal Substance* with the Father.

I must not dismiss the Consideration of the Vindicator's Doctrine, about the Divine Substance, without noting, that his Contradictions and Hamlets are as frequent as his Heresies. For tho he has spoken so often, so carefully, and so much, against Substance and Persons in God; yet when the *Antiphrasical*

*sical Human* is upon him, he talks of these, as of most Certain and Real Things. He says at P. 47. *The Three Persons are Three Real Substantial Beings.* And again, *The Three Persons are substantially distinct.* Now this is to say, the Three Persons are Three distinct Substances: for that is the only possible meaning of, *Three Real Substantial Beings, substantially distinct.* Thus God at last is not only a *Substance*, but he is Three Real distinct Substances. This was the Heresy of *Valentinus Gentilis*, that the Three Persons are *Tres Spiritus substantiali numero distincti.* I with the Vindicator better Success with his Doctrine, than *Valentinus* met at *Geneva* and *Berne.* But the most pleasant of all is, that after the Vindicator had there said, *The Three Divine Persons are substantially distinct;* he immediately subjoins, *tho in one Undivided Substance.* Is it possible a Man should give so little heed to what he says in so Great and Nice a Question? He has not a *sensible* Friend in the World, that will not tell him, that 'tis as much as to say, *The Persons are Three distinct Substances, and yet are but one Undivided Substance.* The first alone is Heresy, the other superadded to it, makes a gross Contradiction. But there are greater Matters, about which I must speak with the Vindicator.

Secondly: *Of the Persons, their Unity, and their Distinction.*

As to the Divine Persons, and the Unity or Oneness of each Person with it self, and its Distinction from the other two Persons; he says as follows.

P. 67. 'A Person is such a Being, as has Understanding, Will, and Power of Action.

P. 66. 'They are Three distinct and Infinite Minds. — Three Intelligent Beings.

P. 258. 'They are Three Holy Spirits.

P. 67. 'These Three Infinite Minds are distinguished just as Three Finite Created Minds are, by Self-consciousness. — Each Divine Person has a Self-consciousness of its

own, and knows and feels it self, as distinct from the other Divine Persons. The Father has a Self-consciousness of his own, whereby he knows and feels himself to be the Father, and not the Son or Holy Ghost. The Son feels himself to be the Son, and not the Father or Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost feels himself to be the Holy Ghost, and not the Father or Son.

P. 104. 'The Persons are *as really* distinct, as Three Human Persons, or Three Men are.

P. 125. 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are *as really* distinct Persons, as *Peter, James* and *John.*

P. 139. 'We must believe Three distinct Divine Persons, each of which is God.

P. 98. 'We must allow each Person to be a God. So also at P. 47. and elsewhere.

He not only contends each Person is God, and a God, but 'tis his Belief (in some places of his Vindication) that each Person is a most consummate and *absolutely perfect* God: For he ascribes to each of them a Personal *absolutely perfect* Wisdom, Goodness, Justice and Power. I say, a Personal perfect Wisdom, &c. besides the Wisdom, Goodness, &c. common to them all by their *Mutual-consciousness.* His words are these:

P. 81. 'There is no Contradiction, that three Infinite Minds should be *absolutely perfect*, in Wisdom, Goodness and Power; for there are Perfections that may be in more than One.

P. 83, 85. 'The Father has his own *Personal Wisdom*, and by Internal Consciousness, all the Wisdom of the Son and Holy Ghost. The Son has his own Personal Wisdom, and by the same Consciousness, the Wisdom of the Father and Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost has his own Personal Wisdom, and all the Wisdom of the Father and Son.

At P. 82. He denies there is in God an Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, Power, &c. but only perfect Wisdom, Goodness, &c.

He acknowledges at P. 67. and frequently elsewhere; that if the Divine Persons

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were

were distinct and separate Persons, they would be Three Gods: but they are, he saith, distinct, but *not separate* Persons: Yet he saith there, each of these Persons is *uncreated singly* and by himself, God, tho not separately God.

P. 48. 'A Finite Spirit's Numerical Oneness can be nothing else, but every Spirit's Unity with it self, and its distinct and separate Subsistence from all other Created Spirits. And this *Self-unity* can be nothing else but *Self-consciousness*; or that it is conscious to its own Thoughts, Reasons, Passions, &c. which no other Finite created Spirit is conscious to, but it self.

Let us put this remarkable Doctrine concerning the Three Divine Persons into a short Creed, and then make *Brief Notes* upon it.

*Dr. Sherlock's Creed.*

"I Believe there are Three distinct Intelligent Infinite Beings, Minds, Spirits, and Persons; distinguished *just as* Three Finite Created Minds or Spirits are, *as really* distinct as three Men, or as *Peter, James and John*: Each of them has a *Self-consciousness*, whereby he knows and feels himself, as really distinct from the other two Divine Persons. Also each of them has his own *absolutely perfect* (for there is *no Infinite*) Wisdom, Goodness, and Power: and by a *Mutual-consciousness*, each Person of these has the whole Wisdom, Power and Goodness of the two other Persons. Each Person has his own Understanding, Will, and Power of Action. Finally, each of these Beings, Minds, Spirits, Persons, is God, nay each of them singly by himself is a God.

This Creed is not only the Vindicator's Sense, but his very Words, which he has often repeated in his Book. Let us deliberately, and minutely consider, whether it be the Faith of Christians, or consistent with Scripture or Reason?

I believe there are Three Infinite Spirits, Minds and Beings. 'Tis the first time I ever heard so in my Life: That God is *unum summum Ens, one Supreme Being*; that he is *Animus, Mens, Spiritus, Πνεῦμα, Nés, a Mind, a Spirit*, is the Voice not only of Scripture, but the agreed Doctrine of all Christians. Let the Vindicator shew me, either in Holy Scripture, or in any Catholick Writer, that these words are used of God in the Plural Number. Do any of them, like this Doctor, call God *Animi Mentes, Πνεύματα, Minds, Spirits, Beings*? Himself is the first who has dared thus to speak in express words; and the reason is, because he saw not what they all saw, that three Infinite Minds, Spirits, or Beings, are Three Gods: For if one Infinite Mind, or Spirit, is One God, Three Infinite Minds, must be Three Gods; else we cannot distinguish between One and Three; nor discern, that the Definition being multiplied, the thing defined is also multiplied.

God, saith our Saviour (at *Job. 4. 24.*) is a Spirit. No, saith the Vindicator (at *p. 253, and p. 66.*) God is Three Spirits, Minds, or Beings; and to teach the contrary, is *both Heresy and Non-sense*. Before a Man bestows such Complements, he ought well to consider on whom they may reflect: for tho he thinks, that such as *Scotus*, and the Note-maker deserve not, that common Humanity and good Manners be shown them; yet he should have had some regard for his Saviour.

Well; but what if Holy Mother Church be in the same Non-sense and Heresy? Mr. *Savage*, who has also written against the Brief Notes, will tell him (at *p. 4.* of his Answer) that the Lateran Council hath defined, that the Three Divine Persons are *not Three Beings*, but that *all together they make Unum summum Ens, One Being*. And I will tell him, that the fourth Council of *Lateran* often repeats it, that God is not *Alind & Alind, more Beings or Things*; but *Una quædam Res, One Thing or Being*. Mr. *Manlow* in his late Book concerning the Trinity, written



(as should seem by the Preface) on occasion of the brief History and brief Notes, describeth God at p. 64. *One single Being*, he adds there, *More than one Ipsi its Being cannot subsist*. But it were endless to cite particular Authorities in this matter: therefore in a word, all Catechisms, Systems, Institutions of Theology, Christian Writers (and even Jews and Mahometans) that have spoken of God, do with our Saviour, define him a Spirit, one Mind, one Being; never three Spirits, three Minds, or three Beings.

I dare not ask it of the Vindicator, because he always answers according to the present Exigence only; but I would ask any other learned and sensible Man, What is the adequate Notion, or true definition of Three Gods? I make no doubt, every such Person would answer without any the least Hesitation; three Infinite Spirits, or Minds, or Intelligent Beings, are three Gods: Which is the Vindicator's Definition of one God.

But to involve himself yet more; he believes, *These Three Infinite Spirits, Minds, Beings and Powers, as distinguished just as Three Finite Created Minds, or Spirits are; they are as really distinct as three Men, or as Peter, James and John*. This is Polytheism, or Plurality of Gods with a witness. 'Tis as gross Polytheism, as the Greeks or Romans were ever guilty of. If a Man had asked the Greek Philosophers, suppose *Porphyrus* and *Heracles*, What Conception we ought to have of the three great Objects of Grecian Worship, *Jupiter*, *Neptune*, and *Pluto*? They would have answered, as the Vindicator does concerning his Trinity, they are three Divine Beings, Minds, or Spirits, distinguished as really, and just as three Men, or as *Peter*, *James* and *John*. This was their Polytheism: not that they believed or worshipped a false God, for that was *single Idolatry*, but that they distinguished the Divinity into three or more Minds, and Beings as really, and just as they distinguished three Men, or as *Peter*, *James* and *John*.

The Vindicator will not be able to give a Rational and Intelligible Account, why it

should not as much be Polytheism in him to distinguish as really, and just as the Heathens did? It will not excuse him, to say, that *Jupiter*, *Neptune* and *Pluto*, were but supposed Divine Persons, but his are really Divine Persons; for granting so much to him for this time, yet to mistake the Object of their Faith and Worship, was only Idolatry; their Polytheism consisted in distinguishing the Object of Worship, the Divinity, into more Minds or Beings as really, and just as the three Men, *Peter*, *James* and *John* are distinguished.

Therefore the mere Learned Trinitarians have been so far from saying, the three Divine Persons are distinguished just as *Peter*, *James* and *John*, that they never durst say, they are really distinct, but modally; something more distinguished (they say) between one another, than from their common Essence; yet not really distinct. They considered that real Distinction makes Alterity and Diversity; but the Unity of God does not permit that he should be *Aliter*, *Aliud*, either from himself, or from any thing that is himself. Since the Essence of a thing is that, *in which is what it is*; whatsoever things are really distinct things, must also be essentially distinct; but now the three Divine Persons having but One Numerical Undivided Essence, by Confession of all Trinitarians; wherefore they cannot be essentially distinct, and therefore not Really, but Modally only. I suppose therefore the Vindicator's Friends will prevail with him, to abate (in his next) very much of his as really distinct, and distinguished just as these three Men, *Peter*, *James* and *John*.

Each of these Divine Persons has a Self-consistency, whereby He Lives and Subsists as distinct from the other two Persons. This Assertion implies that he afterwards adds, that as *his Person is his own proper Distinguishing Will and Power of Action*. Now I say, this is too great and clear an Alterity, or Diversity, that no person can be supposed between any sort of Intelligent Beings.

God

God and his Creatures are not more truly *divers*, than by having each their own proper Understandings, Wills, and Powers of Action, and by really Being, and Knowing, and Feeling themselves as distinct from one another.

Intelligent Beings may indeed be farther *discovered* by Essential Perfections, or by Degrees of Perfection in the same Nature; as Angels are differenced from Men by Essential Perfections, and *Peter* from *John* by Degrees of Human Perfection, and God from his Creatures both by Essential Perfections, and by Degrees of those Perfections that are common to him and them: but the meer Alterity or Diversity of Intelligent Beings, or Minds, is no other but what the Vindicator has imputed to the Divine Persons themselves; namely that each such Being has his own Understanding, Will and Power of Action; and both is and knows himself as really distinct from all others. Persons or Spirits so distinct are as really *divers*, or are no more one another, than the Angel *Michael* is the Man *Peter*; or than *Peter* is *Charles*, the Lion in the Tower.

The Vindicator has discoursed all along so inconsequently, that I have no hopes he can advert to a Demonstration, that requires any Attention of Mind: but I cannot doubt that others of his Party will readily own, he has very much overshot himself; and that there cannot be such Alterity or Diversity in God, the most simple of all Beings. Can there be any thing in God as *divers* and distinct, as *Michael* and *Peter*; nay, as God and his Creatures? They will not say it; for 'tis to deny his Simplicity and Unity, and to compound him not only of several and *divers* Parts, but of *divers* and several Beings, which is too manifestly both Heterodox and Impossible. Can He be *most Simple and Uncompounded*, who is made up of three distinct Understandings, Wills, and Powers of Action; and who is confuted of three Beings, or Minds, that know and feel themselves distinct from one another, as distinct as *Michael* and *Peter*, and even as

God and his Creatures? If so, then it may also be said, that *God and his Creatures are One most Simple Uncompounded Being*. That is the next Paradox the Vindicator has to defend. As for his Mutual-consciousness, I shall demonstrate in its proper place, that it does not only not heal these Breaches, but incurably widens them, because (I shall shew) 'tis so far from being, or effecting any real Unity and Simplicity, that it implicitly and supposeth an Essential Diversity, and a separate Existence of the Three Persons.

Also, each of these Persons has his own Personal absolutely perfect (for there is no Infinite) Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and by a Mutual-consciousness, each of them has all the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the two other Persons. This is still somewhat a clearer Explication of his Doctrine of Three Gods, than any we have yet had: For since each of these Spirits, Minds, or Beings has his own Personal absolutely perfect Wisdom, Power and Goodness; and that besides the Consciousness and Sensation of the absolutely perfect Wisdom, Power, &c. of the other two; there can be nothing wanting to make each Person of them an absolutely perfect God. If there be indeed three really distinct Spirits, or Persons, each of which has his own Personal absolutely perfect Wisdom, &c. and therefore is unabsolutely perfect God, I doubt whether there be a Man in the World (besides the Vindicator) who will not acknowledge upon that Supposition, that there are three really distinct and absolutely perfect Gods. But as far as he seems to be sunk in his Incoherence, I will put to him one Argument.

'Tis the most general and allowed Proof that there is but One God; because one God, or one Infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, is sufficient, as sufficient as a thousand; and there cannot be in God any thing that is needless, useless, or in vain. Therefore I say, if any one of the Vindicator's Divine Spirits, Minds, Beings, or Persons, as suppose the Father has a Personal Infinite (or absolutely perfect) Wisdom, Power and Goodness, there can be no need or

occasion for any other Divine Mind, Spirit, Being, or Person; more such Minds were *needless, useless and in vain*. And from hence it clearly follows, that the Unitarians have *the very same Evidence*, that there is but one absolutely perfect Mind, Spirit, Being and Person, and but one absolutely perfect Wisdom, Power and Goodness, that there is for but One God.

And whereas Mutual-consciousness makes *the Beginning, Middle and End* of Dr. Sherlock's Answer to the Brief Notes; I would know, of what use it can be? What Perfection can it be to any of the three Divine Persons, to be conscious to the other two, when nothing is gained by it, no Wisdom, no Power, no Goodness? For without such Mutual-consciousness, each Person has *his own Personal* absolutely perfect Wisdom, Power and Goodness. The Vindicator has found out a new Attribute in God. Mutual-consciousness, but will never be able to tell how 'tis any Perfection: Nay, it seemeth to be an Imperfection; for to know the same things over and over and over by Mutual-consciousness, which were before fully known by Self-consciousness, is the same in Knowledge, that *Tautology* is in Speech; they are both needless Repetitions, and therefore the first can no more be in God, than the other in wise Men.

At p. 28. and 29. he contends, that 'tis not well said, that God is an *Infinite* Being, or Spirit, or has *Infinite* Wisdom, Justice, Power or Goodness; because no Being can know what is not to be known; no Goodness or Justice can go beyond the measure, that is, can do excessive or unjust things; no Power can do impossible things. But this is a weak allegation; tho he proposes it with his usual Confidence and Disdain, to bear him out in this new and impious Heresy, that the Perfections of God are not Infinite. For things Unjust or Excessive are not the Objects of Goodness or Justice; and 'tis as ridiculous as 'tis rhetorical, to pretend that the Goodness and Justice of God cannot be Infinite, because He cannot do things that

are either Excessive or Unjust; for this is a chief Reason why we ascribe to God Infinite Goodness and Justice, even because he can do nothing at all that is Excessive or Unjust. I cannot doubt, but that upon second thoughts, the Vindicator himself will discern, that it was foolishly urged, *the Justice of God is not Infinite, because He cannot do unjust things*. As for things *not knowable* and *not possible*, they are *Nullities*, and no more the Objects of Wisdom and Power, or of any other Faculty than things Unjust are of Justice; and therefore 'tis as vainly and impertinently required, that God should know or do such things by his Infinite Wisdom and Power, as that He should do unjust things by his Infinite Justice.

But I will farther tell this Opposer of the Divine Perfections, why it is said the Goodness, Justice, Wisdom, and Power of God are each of them Infinite. It is so said, because there is in God an inexhaustible Fountain of Goodness and Justice; that is, he hath an indefectible Propensity, and an Infinite Inclination of doing always and to all, that which is just and good. Also the things he knoweth, and which he has and can do, being innumerable and without End, his Wisdom and Power are also Infinite, or without End.

Finally, *In Answer* said of *these* B. p. 28. *Minds, Spirits, Persons, is God, who, and is then said by himself to be a God*. He grants, and says, at p. 27. and 28. That if the Divine Persons were *separate* Persons as well as distinct Persons, they were without doubt three Gods. But now are not they *separate* Persons, each of which is *single* and *by himself* a Person, and God; for what is a *separate* Person, or a *separate* God, but he who *single* and *by himself* is a Person or God? *Single, separate, and by himself*, are equivalent Terms with all Men and the Vindicator. *By himself* is the very Reason of the Latin *solus*, or *separatus*; therefore, in saying here, that each Person *by himself* is God, he hath granted that each Person is *single* God; which is the thing he all along denies and

abblers, as a giving up the Question to his Adversary.

But he says expressly, each of these Persons is a God. None of his Party ever said so; they will say each of these Persons is God, or is the God, because each of them has the Divine Essence, which is common to all three; but that each Person is a God, is without doubt an heretical Form of Speech, and necessarily introduces three Gods. For *the* before a Substantive, denotes the Unity of the thing spoken of, but *a* always supposes more things of the same kind. Thus we say *the* Sun, *the* Moon, *the* Earth, because there is but one Sun, one Moon, one Earth; and for the same reason we say *God*, or *the* God; but we say *a* Spirit, *a* Man, *a* Person, because there are more Spirits, Men, and Persons. Therefore he that says, there are three Persons, each of which is a God; or that says, the Father is a God, or the Son is a God, or the Holy Ghost is a God; such an one (I say) professes to believe more Gods. I appeal in this matter to all learned Men, of what Persuasion soever; and even to all who do but understand Grammar. But I must profess my wonder, that some Trinitarians in their Explications of their (supposed) Trinity, are no more careful of avoiding such open *Polytheism*, it being a Guilt next to *Atheism*.

Thirdly; *Of the Unity of the Persons, and how they make but one God.*

Last of all; As to the Unity of the three Divine Persons with one another, and how they all make but one God: He largely describeth it in his 4th Section, from Page 46, to p. 86. But the sum of all is this.

'A Finite Spirit's Unity or Oneness with it self, is no other thing but its *Self-consciousness*, or that it knows and feels its own Thoughts, Actions, and Passions. But if either Finite or Infinite Spirits, Minds, or Persons are mutually conscious; that is, are *internally and universally conscious* to one another's Thoughts, Wills, Actions, and

Passions, this maketh them to be *truly and properly Numerically One Spirit*; for (p. 49.) they are hereby as much one with each other, as every Spirit is one with himself; and (p. 56.) they are hereby united to each other, as every Man is to himself. To make three Spirits, or Persons numerically one, it is not enough, that one of them is perfectly conscious to all the rest; they must all of them be mutually conscious; that is, each of them perfectly conscious to all the rest. Thus God is conscious to all his Creatures, to all their Thoughts, Actions, and Passions, as fully conscious as themselves are; but they are not hereby made one with him, because they not being conscious to his Knowledge and Will, there is *not a Mutual-consciousness* between God and them. The Mutual-consciousness of the three Divine Persons, is the *Perichoresis* and *Circumcession* mentioned by the Fathers and the Schools. For *Perichoresis*, or that the Father is in the Son and Spirit, and the Son in the Father and Spirit, and the Spirit in the Father and Son, is nothing else but their universal Mutual-consciousness. We ought not to entertain a gross material Idea of the *Perichoresis*, as if the three distinct Divine Persons were in one another by a mutual Contract or Parts, for they have no Parts; *the only Union and Perichoresis* of Minds and Spirits is, that they are conscious each to others Thoughts and Wills, as perfectly and inwardly as to their own. And thus also it is, that the three Divine Persons are one God; they are one God, and in one another by *perfect Mutual-consciousness*.

The Vindicator often says, that this Explication of the Trinity, maketh a Trinity in Unity as easy and intelligible as the Notion of One God, or but one who is God. But being aware that 'tis not enough that an Explication be intelligible, if it be not also the true Explication; therefore he pretends to prove this Mutual-consciousness of the Father, Son, and Spirit, from *John. 1. 18.* & *10. 15, 31. 32.* & *16. 14, 15.* 1 *Cor. 13. 11.* Then

Then for the Fathers, tho they do not once name Mutual-consciousness, yet he thinketh they meant it. He alledges a few Passages out of *Gregory Nilsson* and *St. Austin*, who are all the Fathers he quotes, and his Citations are not only not to his purpose, but some of them clearly overthrow it. I shall shew him the respect, to consider what he hath said.

1. Whereas he saith, that Mutual-consciousness maketh the three Divine Spirits, to be *as truly and properly numerically one*; and *as much one, as each Spirit and every Man is one with himself*. If this were indeed true, it would as much over-do what the Vindicator expects from it, as he thinketh all former Explications are short of their Design. For the Unitarians desire no more, than that it be owned, God is as truly and properly numerically one, *as every Spirit and Man is one with himself*; for every Spirit and Man is so one with himself, as to be *but one Person*.

Had the Vindicator no way to defend the Athanasian Creed, but by running into Heresy? could he make out the Unity of the Trinity, no other way but (as the Creed speaks) *by confounding the Persons*, or by making them but one Person? I challenge him, or any other for him, to avoid this Consequence of his Doctrine. He saith in above twenty places, this Mutual-consciousness maketh the three Divine Spirits and Persons as much one with one another, as any Spirit or Man is one with himself; then say I, they are but one Person; for that is the Oneness or Unity (the only Unity) of every Spirit or Man with himself. No Spirit or Man has any other but a Personal Unity with himself.

2. Mutual-consciousness cannot be a good Explication of the (pretended) Trinity, because it will equally save the most absurd Doctrine of the Transubstantiation. For as, according to the Vindicator's Doctrine, the *Godhead*, or the One true God, is numerically One, tho there are three Infinite Persons, each of which is God, and a God; because these three Persons are mutually conscious to, or have an inward Sensation of one ano-

ther: So will a Papist say, there is but one *Body*, or but one Numerical Body of Christ; but in the Unity of this *Body*, or Body, there is first the Original Body of Christ, and then abundance of Sacred *Bodies*, in divers places, each of which is a true Body of Christ, and is by Mutual Sensation and Consciousness (for there is no Sensation without Consciousness) numerically one Body with the Original Body in Heaven. This is the Body in Heaven is the Source and Fountain of the rest, as the Father is of the other Divine Persons, but they are all *substantially and universally* one Body, by Mutual-consciousness or Sensation. And this mutual inward Sensation or Consciousness they must needs have, because they are all of them *personally united* to one Infinite Spirit or Person, who (as all Trinitarians say) is *Whole and All* everywhere present, *Totus in totis, et totus in partibus positi*. By this Explication or Hypothesis, all Mr. *Johnson's* Demonstrations against the Transubstantiation, are made to vanish into Smoke. All his Objections from the nature of *Time* and *Extension* are nothing; they are all saved by Mutual-consciousness of the *Hosts* with the Body in Heaven; for Dr. *Shute* has assured us, that Mutual-consciousness or Sensation, doth make an *Essential, Substantial and Numerical Unity* or Oneness between any number of Persons or Things. The Reason holds for *Things* as well as *Persons*, and for a thousand as well as for three.

3. If, as the Vindicator often says, Mutual-consciousness is the *only Union of Spirits or Minds*, such a Mutual-consciousness by which they are universally, or wholly, or perfectly conscious to each other; this would as much prejudice the Incarnation, or Hypostatical Union, as the Vindicator hopes it will help the Doctrine of the Trinity. The Vindicator confesses at p. 269, and 270, that the Human Nature, or Reasonable Soul of Christ, is not universally, or wholly conscious to the Divine Person of the Son; yet he says in perhaps forty places, that a Mutual-consciousness to all one anothers Thoughts and Wills, and Actions is necessary to make an Union of Minds or Spirits. I say, it follows from these



Premises, that the Reasonable Soul or Spirit of the Lord Christ is not united to the Divine Person of the Son. If universal Consciousness is the only possible Union of Spirits, 'tis impossible there should be an Intra-union, or an Hypostatical or Personal Union of the Divine and Human Spirits in Christ.

The Vindicator seems to have been, in some measure, aware of this Objection. For in the Conclusion of his Book, when he comes to the Doctrine of the Incarnation, or Hypostatical Union, he says, "Where different Natures are united into one Person, this universal Consciousness is seated only in the Superior Nature; and in the Inferior, only so far as the Nature is capable, and as the Personal Union requires. But I will forgive the Vindicator, if he can so escape from me.

First; If, as he says, a partial Consciousness in the Inferior Nature be sufficient to effect an Hypostatical or Personal Union, it will follow, that all pious Men are hypostatically or personally united to the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Spirit is universally conscious to all their Thoughts and Actions, and they are partially conscious to his Suggestions and Motions, and that by such an *Internal Sensation* as they are to their own Thoughts and Inclinations. They cannot discern one from the other.

Secondly; If a *Partial Consciousness* between two or more Spirits, where but one of them is universally conscious to the rest, will make them numerically one Person, or (what is the same thing) will effect an Hypostatical or Personal Union; then certainly where two or more Spirits are *universally conscious* to one another, it must much more make them numerically one Person, or effect an Hypostatical or Personal Union. From whence it will follow, that the three Divine Persons being universally conscious to one another, are numerically one Person, and are hypostatically and personally united. But this every one knows is Heresy, and contrary to the Arian Creed, which forbids us to *confound the Persons*.

Thirdly; But the truth is, a Partial Mutual-consciousness in one of the Spirits

(tho the other be universally conscious) is not sufficient to make a Personal Union, or to make two or more Persons to be numerically one Person. The Reason is this, since universal Mutual-consciousness is therefore said (by the Vindicator) to make more Spirits to be numerically one, because in every one of them it amounts to as much as, and is equivalent to the Self-consciousness or Self-unity of each Spirit with itself; for it makes more Spirits as conscious to one another (and therefore as numerically one) as every Spirit is to itself: from hence it necessarily follows, that a Mutual Consciousness which is not universal in both Spirits, cannot effect a Personal Union, or make them numerically one Person, because 'tis undeniable that one of these Spirits (the inferior Nature or Spirit) has not such a Mutual-consciousness with the other Spirit, as is equal to its own Self-consciousness, which makes it Self-unity.

Hitherto I have so argued, as to suppose, with the Vindicator, that such a Mutual-consciousness as he has desired when 'tis universal, may have the effect he suppoeth; that is, may effect a Numerical Oneness or Unity, and have only shewn, that however it has several such Heretical Consequences, that it must not be admitted by him or any other. For we have seen it maketh the three Divine Persons to be but one Person, because (he saith) it makes them as much one, as each Spirit, Person, or Man is one with himself. Also this *Hypothesis* will do as much Service to the Transubstantiation, as to the Trinity; for it will make as Substantial and Numerical an Unity between the *Hosts* and the Body in Heaven, as between the three Divine Spirits. Further, it destroys the Hypostatical Union; for 'tis plain that a Partial Consciousness between the Human and Divine Spirits in the Lord Christ, cannot make a Personal Union, or make them numerically one Person, because in his Human Spirit 'tis not equal to that Self-consciousness, which the Vindicator affirms to be the Self-unity of every Intelligent Being. But now I shall prove, that,

4. Mutual Consciousness, notwithstanding the Vindicator's confident Affirmation, and frequent Repetition of it, doth not indeed make the three Divine Persons to be numerically one, or so one, as each Spirit and every Man is one with himself; nay, it neither is nor effecteth any real Unity at all. For tho' he is careful to suppose, that the three Persons are mutually conscious *by an internal Sensation*, and that they are conscious to all the Thoughts, Wills and Actions of one another, as each Person of them, and as every Man is internally conscious to all his own Thoughts and Action, all which he thinketh must make them numerically one Spirit and one God; because (in his Opinion) it amounts to as much as, and is equivalent to, that Self-consciousness which is (he saith) the Self-unity of each Spirit, and every Man with himself. Tho' (I say) he is careful to suppose thus much, yet I shall mind him of a thing which will ruin his whole Hypothesis; even this, that the three Divine Spirits or Persons, tho' they are universally and internally conscious to one another, yet because they are not *in the same manner* conscious to one another's Thoughts and Actions, as each Spirit of them and each Man is conscious to his own Thoughts and Actions; therefore the Mutual-consciousness which he supposes they have, cannot make them numerically one Spirit, or one God. None of them is conscious to the Thoughts and Actions of the other two *as his own*, but as rising *in* and *from* the other Persons; but each of these Spirits and every Man is conscious to his own Thoughts and Actions, as arising *in* and *from* himself, from his own Personal Understanding, Will, and Power of Action.

Let me hear the Vindicator say, that the Son (for Example) knows and feels the Thoughts and Actions of the Father and Spirit, not as the Thoughts and Actions of the Father and Spirit, but *as his own Personal Thoughts and Actions*, or as originated in his own Person; and I will allow that such Consciousness doth look somewhat like a numerical Oneness or Unity. But I will demon-

strate to him, that so to say, is both Heresy and a Contradiction.

It is Heretical, because then the Father's Personal Action of *Generation* would be known and felt by the Son, as the Action of the Son; that is, the Son would know and feel that he begets himself. Also the mutual Love of the Father, and of the Image, or Son, whereby (as this Arianian Doctrinaires) the Holy Spirit proceeds from them, would be known and felt by the Holy Spirit, as his own Personal Action, not as the Action of the Father and Son. Both which are Heretical when affirmed by any.

But besides, that 'tis Heresy, 'tis also a Contradiction: 'Tis just as much a Contradiction, as to say, that the Person and Personal Understanding of the Son, is the Person and Personal Understanding of the Father. If we confound the Persons and Personal Thoughts and Actions of the Father, Son and Spirit, we confound also their Personal Understandings, Wills, and Powers of Action. If each Person of them has his Personal Understanding, Will, and Power of Action, he has also his Personal Thoughts and Actions; and consequently, the Son cannot feel the Thoughts and Actions of the Father, *as his own* Personal Thoughts and Actions, but as the Thoughts and Actions of the Father. But if all Men must grant, that such Mutual-consciousness of the three Divine Persons, neither is nor doth betoken a Numerical Unity, or any Unity at all. It cannot, I say, make them one Spirit, or One God, but leaves them as much three as other *separate* Spirits or Beings are. But 'tis such a Consciousness as may be, and actually is, between the most opposite contrary and separate Names and Spirits. For all Men are after this manner conversant both to the Holy Spirit and to the Tempter. We are conscious to the Suggestions and Motions of the *first*, and to the Temptations of the other, *by sense and conscience*; yet may in such a perfect intimate Communion, that we do not always discern them from our own Personal Thoughts, or the Motions and Actions of our own Spirit; which is some-

what a *closer* Consciousness than the Vindicator has supposed, or dares suppose between the three Divine Persons; and yet it leaves us separate Beings and Spirits, both from the Holy Spirit, and from the Tempter.

5. If there were indeed such a thing as the Vindicator's mutual Consciousness, I do affirm, it would be so far from being, or from effecting a numerical Unity or Oneness, that it would be the very thing which would most of all prove the three (pretended) Divine Persons are numerically three Spirits and three Gods. For since, according to the Vindicator's Descriptions, each of these Spirits or Persons has his own Personal Understanding, Will and Power of Action, and his own Personal absolutely perfect Wisdom, Power and Goodness; three such Persons are so far from being one Spirit or one God, by Consciousness to each others Wisdom, Power and Goodness, that the more such Persons are mutually conscious, so much the more their *separate* Existence and Divinity is proved. For the more that any of these Spirits knows and feels of Thoughts and Actions arising in the other Spirits or Persons, and to which he is only conscious, but is not the Personal Fountain of them; the more, and more certainly, he must needs know and feel, that himself has a divers and separate Existence from them, and therefore (being an Infinite Person or Spirit) is a divers and separate God.

I challenge the Vindicator to tell me any other possible way for three Divine Persons to be assured of their separate Existence and Divinity; that is, that they are three Gods, but by Mutual-consciousness, or by knowing and feeling (as he speaks) the Thoughts and Actions of one another, *not as their own*, but as the Thoughts and Actions of other Divine Spirits. How should the Father, for example, know He is a separate Spirit and God from the Son, but by knowing and feeling the Actions of the Son, not as his (the Father's) Actions, but as the Actions and Thoughts of another Divine and Infinite Person? It was therefore a great Incogitance in the Vindicator, to urge the (pretended) Mutual-consciousness of the

three (pretended) Divine Persons, as their numerical Unity or Oneness, when it demonstrates them to be numerically three separate and divers Beings, Spirits and Gods.

Had the Vindicator said, there are three Infinite Spirits, who are mutually conscious, THEREFORE there are three Gods; all Mankind would have allowed his Consequence, as certain and self-evident from that Proposition. But to say there are three Infinite Spirits, conscious to one another, THEREFORE there is but one God; this all Men of Sense will laugh at, as a palpable Falshood. 'Tis a Contradiction in the Terms, to tell us of *One only God mutually conscious*; for in plainer English 'tis to say, *One only God conscious to, or with other Gods.* Or, *One only God conscious to more Gods.*

6. But the great Matter is still behind, that after all, our Blessed Saviour himself has declared, that there is not this Mutual-consciousness between the (supposed) Divine Persons, which the Vindicator has made to be the Substance of his Answer to the Brief Notes, and the Brief History. *Of that day and hour (the day and hour of the last Judgment) none knoweth, no not the Angels which are in Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only; Mark 13. 32. Mat. 24. 36.* Here it is expressly denied, that the Son knows the time of the last Judgment, and as clearly intimated that the Father, and *the Father only* (therefore not the Holy Ghost, if we take the Holy Ghost for a particular Person) knows that time. Therefore, say I, the Son and Holy Ghost are not conscious to all the Knowledge, Will and Thoughts of the Father, and consequently are not Gods, or God.

To avoid this Argument, the Vindicator and his Party answer, that Christ in that Text speaks of himself, only as he is a Man, not as he is God, or a God. Well, but how shall we save the Honour of the Holy Ghost, for 'tis there also said, that *the Father only* knoweth that day and hour? Why, for that, the word *Father* here does not signify *the Father only*, but includes the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But when mention is made of the *Father* and the *Son* in the same Period, and they are opposed to each other, 'tis much

much that neither the Son should signify the Son, (for the Human Nature, or Christ as Man, according to the Trinitarians, is not the Son) nor the Father signify the Father, but the Father and two other Persons. If this be not to form the Scriptures to our preconceived Opinions, and not our Opinions by the Scriptures; let the Vindicator himself tell me, what is it? Should a Socinian distort the known sense and use of Words at this rate, what Out-cries should we have against them!

Nor was it our Saviour's manner to answer after this equivocal delusory fashion: But when the Disciples were more inquisitive than he liked of, he was not wont to shirk off the matter by an Equivocation, but plainly to tell them, They asked after what 'twas not permitted to them to know. *Wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?* say the Disciples at Acts 1. 6, 7. *'Tis not for you to know,* saith our Saviour. How unlike is this direct sincere Answer to that which the Trinitarians have made for him about the Day of Judgment? For their Answer runs thus; "As to the day and hour of Judgment, of which you enquire, none knoweth it, not the Angels, nor the Son himself, but my Father only. But when I say the Son, that is, *I my self* knew it not, I mean (*saith he to himself*) according to my Human Nature, which indeed is not the Son; and when I say, only my Father knoweth it, I mean (*saith he again to himself*) only my Father and my self, and the Holy Ghost. This is such an over-grown Equivocation, and Mental Reservation, as in our Town would pass for a gross Lie: but that the Vindicator and his Party have assured us, that our Saviour himself spake thus. But I do not think any sensible and honest Man will believe 'em, if he considers it twice.

'Tis thus also that they have dealt with God himself, speaking in the first Commandment; *Thou shalt have no other Gods but Me,* saith God in the words of the first Commandment. And to render this his Sovereign Revelation and Will the more awful and regarded by us, he delivered it in Thunders

that shook the Heavens and the Earth. Notwithstanding this, and tho every one knows, that the Style of Laws is plain and simple, and the words to be understood in a popular familiar Sense, because they are delivered to the meanest as well as the highest Capacities; yet have those who call themselves the Orthodox and the Catholick Party eluded this Revelation and Law, to which all the rest refer, and on which they depend, and have made room for other Gods besides him. *Thou shalt have no other Gods besides Me;* that is, (*say they*) Thou shalt have no other Gods but *Us*, no other Gods, but God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: Thou shalt have no other Gods, but three Infinite Almighty, All-knowing Persons; whereof one is the Father, another his Son, and the third an holy Spirit distinct from both.

I persuade my self that no Man can think that so much as one Person of the six hundred thousand *Israelites* who assembled to hear God speak, did (or possibly could) understand thus to be his meaning; but on the contrary, when they heard, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but Me,* they did, and their Posterity to this day do, understand it no otherways but thus, *Thou shalt never know or own more than one Divine Person, even Me who now speak to thee.* When Points of Faith are turned into Laws, we ought to be careful how we elude their plain and obvious Sense by *Subtilties*; for such things will not excuse the Breach of Laws, especially of the first and chief Law, the ground of the rest, to which they all refer as their chief Design. Rather we should interpret all other dubious and disputable Scripture-Expressions by such solemn Principal and Chief Revelations and Laws. The Vindicator, 'tis said, is writing a Book to prove, that there are more Persons (the Son and Spirit) besides the Eternal God and Father of our Lord Christ, who are Gods, or God, that is, he is writing a Book against the first Commandment. And I confess, that as his Party have ordered the vulgar Editions and Translations of the Holy Bible, it will be no hard matter to alledge some very plausible Texts so such as know not the Deceits that have been

been used, to make some Texts of Scripture contradict others. But I challenge him before-hand, to produce but one such Proof or Text for his purpose, as is not of such *suspected Credit and Authority* in the Originals, that no prudent Man would build any thing on it, much less oppose it to the first Commandment, or is so manifestly faulty in the English Translation, that some of the most Learned of his own Party do reject it as no Proof; or finally, is not only not to his purpose, but proves what the Unitarians contend for, the Unity of God, or that *God is One*. But this was a Digression; I left off at our Saviour's words, *Of that day and hour (the day and hour of the last Judgment) none knoweth but my Father only*, which I hope were sufficiently vindicated from the Perversions of Dr. Sherlock, and others.

But let our Saviour say what he will, and as expressly as he will, the Doctor will prove against him, that there is this perfect Mutual-consciousness between Him, the Holy Spirit, and the Father.

His first Objection is from *Job. 1. 12. The only Begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, hath declared him*. To be in the Bosom of another, signifies, says the Vindicator, to be conscious to that Person's Mind, and most intimate Secrets; therefore the Son is conscious to the Father. *Answer*. But why did not the Vindicator produce some Texts to confirm this Interpretation? The truth is, the Scripture-Sense of this Phrase, *To be in the Bosom of another*, is this, *to be most dear to that Person*, as is clear from *Deut. 22. 24. 26. 2 Sam. 12. 3*. So the Sense of the objected Text is only this, The only Begotten Son, who is most dear to the Father, hath declared him, i. e. hath made known his Will and Commands in the Gospel.

He objects, *Job. 10. 15. As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father*. *Answer*. If the Vindicator had look'd into the Critical Commentators of his own Party, he would have seen, that *to know* in this Text is *to love*. But allowing him his Sense of the words; I answer, as much is prophesied of all Christians in Gospel-times, *Jer. 31. 34. They shall*

*all know me, from the greatest to the least of them*. Nor does [as] here note Equality of Knowledge in the Son, but Likeness only; as at *Mat. 5. 48. Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven, is perfect*. Therefore the Sense is, the Father knoweth me, and I also know the Father (not by Natural or Congenit Consciousness, but) by his Revelation. See *Rev. 1. 1*.

*Job. 10. 30. I and the Father are One*. This Oneness or In-being, saith the Vindicator, is a Mutual-consciousness and inward Sensation of each other. *Answer*. But our Saviour explains this Oneness, to be such an Unity or Oneness as is (or should be) among all Christians; which is not by Mutual-consciousness or inward Sensation, but Mutual and Inward Love of one another. *John 17. 11. Father, keep those whom thou hast given me, that they may be One as we are*. *Ver. 22. That they may be One, even as we are One*.

Again, he urges *Job. 10. 38. The Father is in me, and I in him*. The Vindicator insists much on this, as a clear Indication of an inward Consciousness between the Father and Son. *Answer*. But here again our Saviour has otherways explain'd himself, namely thus, that he means such an In-being as is between all Christians and the Father; an In-being by Love, and the Gift of the Spirit, on the part of the Father, and on our part, by Love, and Obedience, and Profession of the Truth: *John 17. 21. That they all may be One, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may be One in us*. *1 Joh. 3. 24. He that keepeth his (God's) Commandments, dwelleth in Him, and he in him*. *1 Joh. 3. 13. He by we know we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*. *Ver. 15. Whosoever shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*. *Ver. 16. He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*.

*John 15. 15. All things that the Father hath are mine*. *Answer*. See what hath been satisfactorily said to this, in the Brief History, pag. 103.

*1 Cor. 2. 10, 11. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what*



*Man knoweth the things of a Man; but the Spirit of a Man, which is in him, & even the things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.* Amen. The Emphasis lies here; that the Spirit knows the things of God, *even as* the Spirit of a Man knows the things of a Man. Now admitting, that the Holy Ghost or Spirit were a Person, as many Unitarians (particularly the *Rel. Tr. Soc.* and *Disc.*) believe he is, out of the holy Spirit or Angels, and called the Spirit by way of Excellence, and the Holy Spirit, to distinguish him from Satan, who is chief of the Wicked and Apostate Spirits or Angels. Admitting, I say, that the Holy Spirit is a Person, see what hinders that he may know the things of God. That is (appears by Ver. 9.) *the things that God has prepared for them that love him*, as fully and perfectly as the Spirit of a Man knoweth the Designs and Counsels of a Man towards other Men? Cannot God as fully reveal those things of God to this holy and super-eminent Spirit, as any

Man knows his own Will and Designs of God towards others? and is it not true, that ouraviour also is said to know the things of God? *Rev. 1. 1.*

If it be demanded, If this be all, Why is this Spirit called the Spirit of God? I hope the Vindicator knows, that 'tis the manner of the Hebrew Tongue to name things great in their kind, by the name of God. He may also be called the Spirit of God, as Prophets are in Scripture called the *Messy of God*, because both one and the other are *for by God*. And this Spirit is so much the Chief of all other Spirits, that are God's Messengers; that he is therefore sometimes called by way of Eminence and Excellence, the Spirit of God. So an *Atheist* or *Brutal* Unitarian would answer to the Objection from this Text. How a *Social* Unitarian would answer, may be seen in the *Brit. History*, from p. 93, to p. 102.

## THE CONCLUSION.

Thus I have consider'd Dr. *Shirley's* new Explication of the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation by Self-consciousness and Mutual consciousness, and therein the substance and force of his Book, which he has so vainly and untruly called a *Vindication* of these Doctrines. His Book can deserve that Title in no other sense, but as 'tis a supercilious, disdainful, and peevish Answer. But for that, the Unitarians know very well, that when Learned Men rage in such a manner, that they have neither Humanity nor good Manners left, *'tis because they find themselves pin'd*: they know too, that *Omnis Rerogata est Codinis sui Persecutor*. Those who have hitherto said (who are all that have read his Books) there is nothing considerable in Dr. *Shirley's* Books, but what he either borrowed from the *Sermons*, or build upon their Foundation; such will wonder he would show no better Reasons why he hath shifted sides. He promised at P. 21. to examine the *Brief Notes* Paragraph by Paragraph, that the Author might not complain of unfair Usage: But at p. 245, before he was got half thorough the Notes, he pretends to grow weary of the *Notes-maker's* long Harangues

(tho the whole Notes are less than a Sheet of Paper) and so gives his Reader only so much of the *Brief Notes* as he fancied he could deal withal. Therefore the Author of the Notes will say, this was not only unfair, but (after a Promise) *false Usage*. Others say, the Doctor grew self-conscious, sensible of his Inability, and therefore durst not trust his Reader with those dangerous Notes, and his crude Answer to them. But where he pretended to answer, he should not have suppressed so many Periods, nor omitted to take notice of the *Reasons* used, supposing it was enough if he opposed the *Doctrines*. Least of all should an Answerer of his standing and Reputation in Polemic Squabble, have quietly pass by some whole Paragraphs, the most material in the Notes; or only cast a look squeeze'd jest at 'em.

As to the slight *Queries* which he sometimes opposes to the *Answers* in the Notes and History, there is an Answer preparing, and almost finish'd, to every thing in his Books, to be publish'd, unless in his next he is content to own *re desists it not*. Nor as to the Unitarians themselves, they are upon several accounts not forward

would publish a further Answer. First, They foresee, that the Vindication is not a Book, by which the Church of England, or any other Part of the Trinitarians, will abide; they look for another kind of Answer, and therefore reserve their Defences to a time and occasion that may more require them. Another Reason is, they dare trust the History and Notes with the Doctor's Answer, tho' he durst not trust his Answer with the Notes; only they desire the Reader to read the Notes and History as they are published by them, in entire Discourses, not as they are mangled, and cut into Things by the Vindicator. They are confident, that no discerning Man who shall read *Dr. Sherlock's* Vindication, and afterwards read again the Notes or History, as they are published by the Unitarians, but will find himself as much troubled to untie the Gordian Knots, as if they had never read the Solutions of the Vindicator. But I will conclude with him, with only observing something to what he has, with his usual Charity and Sagacity, objected to the Hopes of Salvation in the Unitarian way.

The Note maker had said, that, 'In these Points which have been always controverted in the Churches of God, 'tis not necessary to Salvation, that a Man happen to be of the right Persuasion; 'tis sufficient if he use *reasonable Diligence* to be informed; if after that he mistakes, he is in *no fault at all*, his Error is *pure Ignorance*, not a culpable Ignorance; for how can it be culpable not to know that, of which a Man is ignorant after a *diligent and impartial Inquiry*? To this the Vindicator answers in several Pages, but all the Argument of his Answer is in these words, 'Then how comes an Atheist, a Turk, or a Jew to be in any fault? Does the Note-maker think that no Atheist, Turk, or Jew ever used *reasonable Diligence*? And why should not their reasonable Diligence serve their turns, as well as the reasonable Diligence of *Socinians*, and other Heretics? ---- And does not the Reason he gives, extend to the *whole Christian Religion*, as well as to those Points that (he says) have been always controverted in the Churches of God?

To this Complement of the Vindicator, I answer. 1. I do not think Atheism ever was the *abiding* Sentiment of any Man, who took time to consider; and I deny that any Atheist ever used *reasonable*, or but tolerable *Diligence* to it informed. 2. As to Jews and Turks, who believe and worship the one true God, and him only; perhaps they are in a nearer Proximity to Salvation than such, as against sufficient Opportunities of a right Information, and for Worldly Interests have apostatized from the Christian Faith to the Arabian. 3. Those that deny the *whole Christian Religion*, after having known it and the Reasons of it, the Note-maker is assured whatever *Diligence* they may have used, they have not made (as the Notes expressly require) an *impartial Inquiry*. They have been *biassed* by their Prejudices, or their Lusts, *against the whole Christian Faith*; as others (we see) are *biassed* against the *most Essential* Parts of it, the Unity of God, his *Infinite* Sapience, Goodness, Justice, and Power, his *Universal* Omnipresence, the Liberty of our Wills to Good and Evil. If the Vindicator thinks otherwise, let him speak out, and plainly tell the World his Mind; that a Man may have used *reasonable Diligence*, and also made an *impartial Inquiry*, and yet disbelieve the *whole Christian Religion*. This, I hope, may be enough to Dr. Sherlock at present.

As for Mr. *Savage*, who hath also written against the Brief Notes, if he had pleased to write after an intelligible manner, he seems to be a Person that might have deserved a careful Answer: But having wrapt himself up in a School-Cloud, and wrote in such towering Metaphysics, as are much above ordinary or unlearned Capacities. I am sensible that, with respect to the Unitarian Cause, his Book can do neither good nor hurt. However, the Unitarians thank him for his design to inform and instruct them; and they desire him not to take it amiss, if they also advise him, that the next time he writes for the Information of the *Illiterate and Vulgar*, he would write more intelligibly. For,

*Learning's Light, when held too high, goes out.*

*The End.*